



WATCHET CONSERVATION SOCIETY



St Decuman's Church & Holy Well Brendon Road Watchet

St Decuman's church sits high on the hill overlooking the ancient harbour town of Watchet.

The oldest part of the church dates back to the latter part of the 12th century.

The list of vicars at the back of the church goes back to 1310 but Wells Cathedral has records going back to 1245.

As you walk down the path towards the church you will see part is stone faced, whilst some is painted white. The white lime wash is the oldest part including the chancel at the east end of the church which is 12th century with substantial additions in the 13th century. The north aisle and tower are dressed in an attractive red sandstone and these date back to the 15th century.

The path takes you past the south wall of the church and the observant will notice a part hidden door in the chancel wall which is the original entrance to the 12th century church.

You enter the church through the original 15th century porch and solid oak doorway. (This type of porch being quite common in West Somerset). (Beneath your feet you will see an unusual floor made from slates set on edge in a checkerboard pattern).

Once inside the church to your left you will see the 15th century font and behind it, on the wall, the list of vicars going back to 1310 and more unusual the name of the monarch during their incumbency.

If you now look behind you to the opposite end of the church you will see a carved wooden rood screen stretching almost the width of the church. The rood screen separates the nave (the main part of the church) from the chancel



and choir. The oldest part of the screen is the lower half, in front of the Lady Chapel to your right. If you look closely you will see the remains of the medieval paintwork which would at one time have covered most of the carved wood.

As you pass through the screen into the chancel you are now in the oldest part of the church and between the choir stalls you will see a floor of 13th century tiles, thought to have come from Cleeve Abbey.

The carved wooden altar rails are among the finest in the area and date back to the 17th century. If you look to your left whilst in front of the altar (on the north wall) you will see the oldest window in the church. This 13th century lancet window with the coat of arms of King Edward I has sadly been damaged across the centuries, but has been meticulously restored.



In the north east corner of the church you will find many memorials to the Wyndham family, who have been benefactors since the 15th century including a carved wooden box pew where the family would have sat for services. This is dated 1699. Their most recent gravestones, now situated outside on the north side of the church, are dated 2004 and 2006.

If you now look up at the 'wagon' roofs above the nave and side aisles you will see rich carvings with figures of angels lining the aisles, these date back to 13th century. In addition the wooden bosses are worth a look, being all different.

You will find a more detailed guide book in the church but we hope this has given you a taste of our wonderful historic church.

Alan Jones 2013

St. Decuman's Holy Well



Continuing along the lane passing the church on your left you will come to St. Decuman's Well on your right.

This has been a known holy place since the 5th century when Decuman came here from Wales and probably predates the Celtic saint.

Please respect this ancient holy site, it is for all who seek a place of quiet, peace and tranquillity.

This leaflet is provided by and funded by the Conservation society, with the permission of St Decuman's church.

WATCHET CONSERVATION SOCIETY

The conservation society is a voluntary body set up by local residents to promote, for the benefit of the public, the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment of Watchet Town.

If you would like to know more about the work of the conservation Society or would like to join and become more involved in the conservation of the town, please contact:-

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